



# Boston Connects

## people to economic opportunity

A 501(c)3 Not-For-Profit Community Organization in Partnership with the City of Boston

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## From the Executive Director



Christine Araujo, Exec. Dir.

In recent months the Board and staff at Boston Connects, Inc. (BCI) have implemented a large number of initiatives consistent with our Strategic Plan.

First, we have greatly increased our visibility in cyberspace. [www.bostonEZ.org](http://www.bostonEZ.org), launched in September, allows visitors to:

- access Boston's Strategic Plan;
- learn of current programs;
- know who our Board members are and read minutes of Board meetings;
- see our economic development initiatives;
- and
- use links to quickly access other Zone resources.

BCI's office has moved to 2201 Washington Street in the old Woolworth's building in Dudley Square. Our new phone number is (617) 541-2670. Access to the building and to parking is off Ruggles Street. We are close to the Orange line and to numerous bus lines.

All Board-approved programs have been successfully implemented and a few are being brought

to closure. We have described them in greater detail in the Strategic Vision for Change section on the next page. We encourage you to keep up to date by visiting our website.

To support the growing number of initiatives, staff has grown. Shirley Carrington continues as the Deputy Director. Lesley Cayton is our Technology Coordinator. Inez Foster is our Program/Contract Manager. Catherine Howard is the Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director. Cheryl O'Brien is our Employer Outreach Coordinator for the Urban Rural Opportunity Grant. Nadena Watson is the Administrative Assistant. Jerome Frazier is working for us on contract to monitor construction jobs.



Aerial view of 2201 Washington Street.

Boston Connects, Inc.'s Annual Meeting is scheduled for January 9th, 2002 and will occur at 5:30 p.m. at the Boston Water and Sewer Commission's offices at 980 Harrison Avenue. All are welcome to attend and there is parking available. Please R.S.V.P. to (617) 541-2674.

We look forward to hearing from our keynote speaker Mayor Thomas M. Menino.

**Turn to pages 2  
& 3 for current  
program info!**



Thomas M. Menino, Mayor



View from new Boston Connects, Inc. offices.

## Strategic Vision for Change

Boston's 1998 Strategic Plan recognized the value and impact that the Enhanced Enterprise Community had on Zone residents. These projects which have played a role in neighborhood revitalization include: the new South End Health Center, North Coast Seafood, and Palladio Hall. The Plan also recognized that other initiatives were needed to support the community to more actively participate in the workforce and to successfully apply for and fill jobs created by these and other brick-and-mortar projects. Community priorities were identified as Education & Job Readiness, Health & Well Being, and Access to Technology.

The Boston Connects, Inc. (BCI) Board of Directors and Mayor Thomas M. Menino, have been proactive in promoting investments in education & job readiness, economic development, and health & well-being initiatives.

### Education and Job Readiness

In the Fall, BCI, in collaboration with the Mayor's Office for New Bostonians, funded 30 additional seats for EZ residents in services for **English for Speakers of Other Languages**. La Alianza Hispana, Notre Dame Education Center, and the Perkins Community Center have served residents whose birth countries include Puerto Rico, Haiti, Vietnam, Poland, China, Cape Verde and Albania.

### Human Development

In past years, BCI has funded **Civic Participation** grants (\$50,000) for pro-grams tailored to meet their community's needs. Sixteen **Child Care Quality Improvement** grants (\$50,000) to center-based and family programs allowed Zone parents to access job training and employment services while providing childcare to 797 children.

### Technology

In early September, BCI convened a roundtable of community based organizations to discuss their institutional technology needs. The general consensus was that community based organizations were in great need of training so that their own staff could learn how to maintain their networks.

The BCI online client tracking system was launched for grantees in October. Current users have been pleased with its user-friendliness. This system is one element in ensuring that Zone residents continue to receive the follow-up services that they might need.

### Economic Development

The Empowerment Zone, through its predecessor, the Enhanced Enterprise Community, has been extremely active in promoting economic development initiatives through unique access to loans, grants and bonds. Projects include the South End Health Center, Harry Miller Co., Harrison Supply, Fairfield Center, Palladio Hall, New Boston Seafood, North Coast Seafood, Grove Hall Mecca and the Best Western Roundhouse.

Two additional projects have just completed some milestones:

Merengue Restaurant is one element of the **La Cocina** development at 156-162 Blue Hill Avenue. This joint venture between Nuestra Comunidad and Hector Pina, owner of the restaurant was supported by \$540,000 in EZ 108/EDI funds. The ribbon cutting was held on September 17th, 2001.

**Labouré Center** in South Boston had its topping off celebration on December 3rd, 2001. When this project is complete, the array of services for children, teens and families, now spread over a number of buildings, will be merged into one facility adjacent to the West Broadway public housing development. The BCI Board had voted its support of \$3 million in 108/EDI funds for this project.

The majority of these developments have resulted in the creation of new jobs which have provided community residents with both a step up the career ladder, and essential and disposable income.

### Tax Implications for Businesses

The Empowerment Zone includes a large section of the Financial District, Downtown Crossing, Chinatown, the Leather District, the South Boston Seaport and numerous businesses in the neighborhoods of the South End, South Boston, Roxbury, Mission Hill, and Dorchester. Businesses in all these areas are eligible for a number of tax benefits just for being located in the Zone, such as Section 179 Expensing, Brownfield Expensing, and WOTC Wage Credit.

Another important element to Boston businesses is the Federal tax credit available to employers who hire Zone residents. Please visit the Boston Connects, Inc. website at [www.bostonEZ.org](http://www.bostonEZ.org) to find out whether your business is located in the Zone or your employees live in the Zone.

## Winter/Spring Programs

One of our primary goals is to ensure that Zone residents receive the education and training they need to secure jobs. The following programs continue to have seats available at no cost for Zone residents who qualify. Call (617) 541-2670 for more detailed information on all our programs.

### Work Readiness Training

To date, 35 Zone residents, many of who have been out of the job market for a while, have sharpened and enhanced their work skills in this eight to twelve week program. They will continue to receive follow-up and support services, job counseling, and information and referrals for six months.

Training is provided in retail, child care, customer service, office support, transportation, construction related, package distribution, security, maintenance, and insurance. Contact the following community based organizations to enroll:

**ABCD** Call: (617) 357-6000  
19 Temple Place, Boston

**Asian American Civic Assoc.** Call: (617) 426-9492  
200 Tremont Street, Boston

**Morgan Memorial Goodwill** Call: (617) 445-1010  
1010 Harrison Avenue, Roxbury

**Veterans Benefits Clrhse.** Call: (617) 541-8846  
126 Warren St., Roxbury

### English for Speakers of Other Languages

Because of the great demand for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), BCI is funding additional seats for Zone residents. These programs are available in the community and at publicly assisted housing developments:

**El Centro del Cardenal** Call: (617) 542-9292  
76 Union Park St., South End

**Mission Main Res. Assoc.** Call: (617) 879-1620  
39 Smith St., Mission Hill

**South Boston Action Ctr.** Call: (617) 269-5160  
424 W. Broadway, South Boston

**Parker Hill/Fenway NSC** Call: (617) 445-6000  
714 Parker St., Roxbury

**Boston Community Centers** Call: (617) 635-4920  
339 Dudley St., Roxbury

**Hyde Square Task Force** Call: (617) 524-8303  
375 Centre Street, Jamaica Plain

**Jewish Vocational Services** Call: (617) 423-8660  
26 West St., Downtown Boston

**Notre Dame Ed. Center** Call: (617) 268-1912  
50 West Broadway, South Boston

**Oficina Hispana** Call: (617) 427-0500  
125 Amory St., Roxbury

### Skills Training for Growth Industries

Zone residents thinking about a new career, planning on changing careers, or needing to upgrade their skills for their current jobs can receive appropriate training at no cost.

A review of growth industries indicates that Health Care, Education, Technology, and Business and Finance are the areas with the greatest job demand. Boston Connects, Inc. is providing skills training for Zone residents without a college degree through Boston's Career Center network.

At the following Career Centers, participants will receive a full assessment of their skills and then can decide which programs best meets their needs.

**Boston CareerLink** Call: (617) 536-1888  
1010 Harrison Avenue, Roxbury

**JobNet** Call: (617) 338-0809  
210 South Street, Boston

**WorkPlace** Call: (617) 737-0093  
99 Chauncy Street, Boston

### Alternative Education (Middle School)

Are you a parent, grandparent, or guardian of a 7th grader who might benefit from being in a small class? There are seats available to Zone residents at the Tobin Community Center in Mission Hill. All Zone 7th graders who have displayed certain at-risk behaviors can apply. When accepted, students will enroll in the Boston Public Schools.

### Brownfield Remediation Training

It is common for older cities, such as Boston, to have sites that are contaminated by materials that were previously considered harmless to the environment or to a person's health. Also known as "Brownfields," these sites need to be cleaned up before new construction can occur. The BCI training program, which starts on January 7, 2002, will give Boston residents certifications in construction site safety, and training in emergency responses to hazardous material spills, lead paint removal and asbestos abatement. Funding is from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Register at (617) 541-2670.

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Thomas M. Menino, Mayor

**Economic self-sufficiency for individuals, families and communities.**